

**CORRUPTION
HC scraps
Morshed's
jail term**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday scrapped a 13-year prison sentence handed down by a special court to former BNP foreign minister M Morshed Khan in a corruption case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) during the regime of caretaker government.

A division bench comprising Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice AKM Zahirul Hoque in its ruling also said the conviction is illegal.

The judges came up with the verdict after granting an appeal filed by the BNP leader against his sentence.

On August 4, 2008, a special judge's court convicted Morshed of amassing wealth worth Tk 1.70 crore illegally and concealing information about wealth worth Tk 91.34 lakh in his wealth statement submitted to ACC.

The ACC filed the case against the BNP leader and his wife with Gulshan Police Station on December 10 in 2007.

The BNP leader earlier obtained bail in the case from the HC.

Turn population into skilled manpower

Say experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Failure in controlling population growth will lead to overall failure of development efforts of Bangladesh, said experts at a discussion here yesterday.

They recommended that the government declare "population emergency" and put population at the centre of all development efforts and act accordingly to turn population into skilled manpower and control birth rate.

"It will be an overall failure if we fail to address population problems," said Dr Syed Modasser Ali, adviser to the Prime Minister on health and family welfare while speaking as the chief guest.

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) organised the discussion on demographic explosion and its future at its auditorium.

Annually two million people are added to the country's estimated 150 million existing population. But cultivable land came down to 70 lakh hectares now from 90 lakh hectares in 1971 putting food security at risks, officials estimated.

Natural disasters and economic reasons are pushing rural to urban migration causing rapid, but unplanned urbanisation, said speakers.

"All the problems linked to population could be solved only by investing in education. But, we cannot do it though we know it," said Modasser Ali.

Very little amount of money is spent in the projects critical for the country's development, he said adding, "We need a plan implementable for population management and family planning."

Population Science professor of Dhaka University Dr AKM Nurun Nabi said Bangladesh is not being able to properly manage population growth.

"What do we do with the unskilled population we are generating?" he said in a presentation.

Nabi said 40 percent of the Dhaka's populations are living in the slums that lack health and education facilities. He suggested a separate authority to develop human resources, and not putting whole task on the education ministry.

Economist Dr Barkat-e-Khuda said there has been lack of political will for the

last two decades that failed implementation of the policies.

Former ambassador Kazi Anwar Masud questioned if Bangladesh would be a failed state with 250 million population in next 50 years.

Planning Commission official Fakrul Ahsan said now Bangladesh is nearly self-sufficient in rice, but dependent on most other food grains. If the current rate of birth and food production continues, the country will face real problems in future, he added.

While moderating the discussion, Shushashoner Janney Nagorik Chairman Professor Muzaffer Ahmad said a quality census is imperative to have a comprehensive planning on population.

Rural to urban migration is taking place rapidly, while there is an issue of climate refugees, he said, adding: "We must think of what our response would be."

Former director general of family planning directorate Mohammad Abdul Qayyum and BISS Director General Major Gen Golam Mohammad also spoke at the discussion.

Two arrested with heroin

UNB, KERANIGANJ

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two drug peddlers along with 300 grams of heroin from a private car at Dhaleshwari Bridge on Dhaka-Mawa Road yesterday evening.

The arrested were identified as Shamsul


Haque, 40, son of Mongol Khan and Jilan Matbor, 28, son of Hamed Matbor of Bhanga upazila in Faridpur.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-10 led by senior assistant director Nur-e-Alom Siddique searched the Dhaka-bound car from Faridpur and arrested them along with the contraband item at around 5:00pm.

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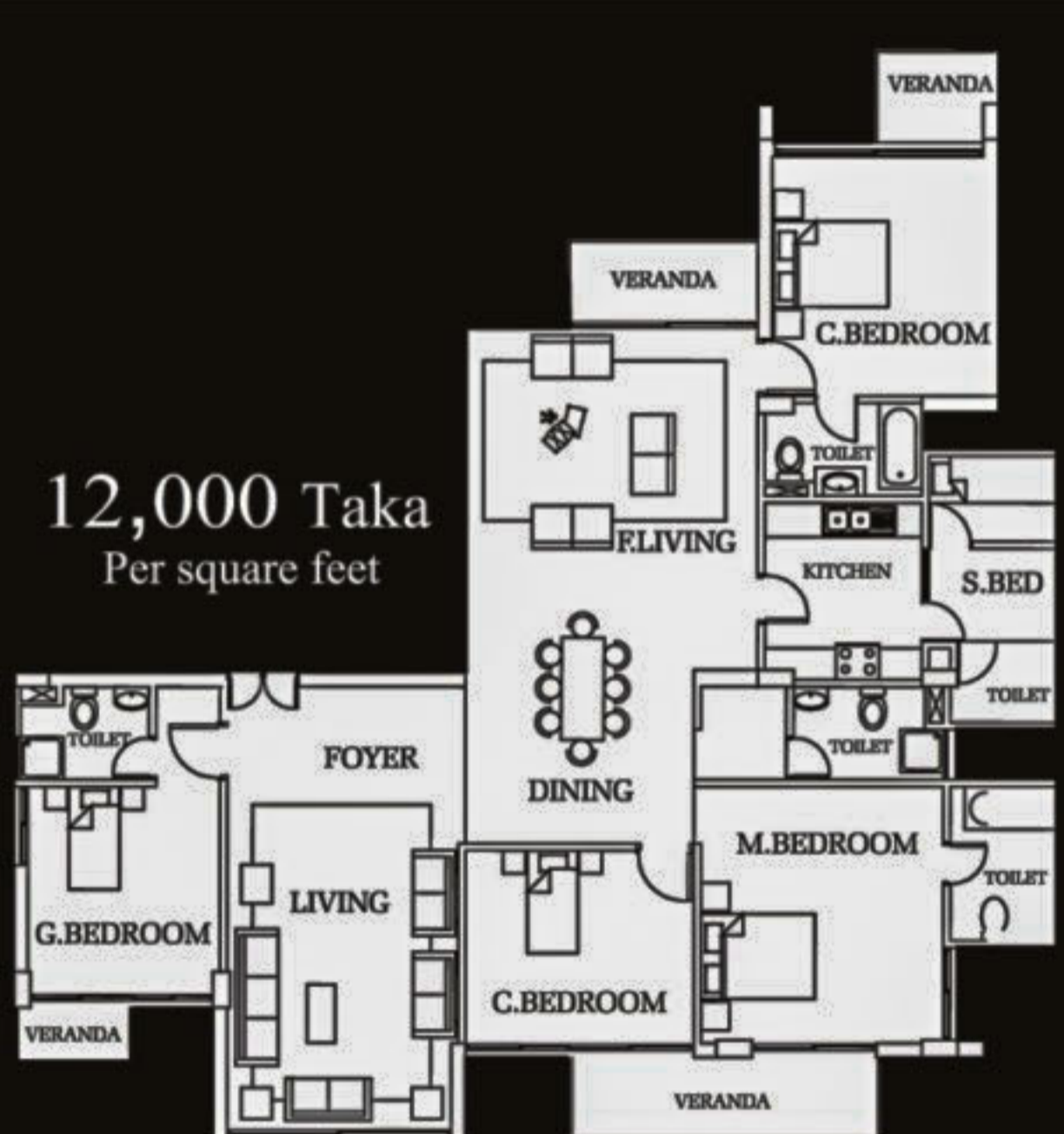
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